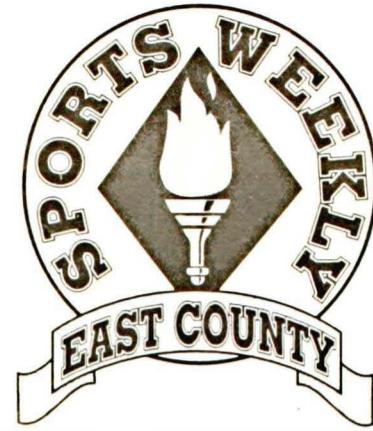


The Lemon Grove REVIEW



Vol. 49, No. 98

Serving Lemon Grove and nearby communities

Tuesday, August 19, 1997 25¢

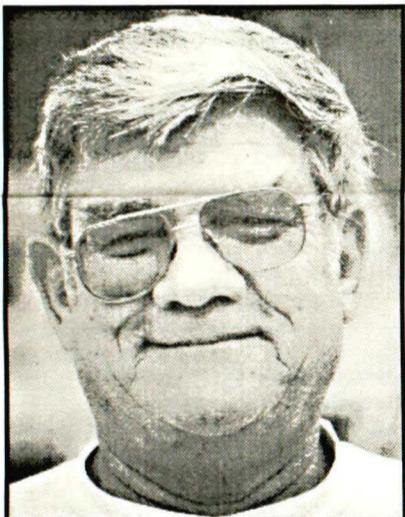
One man's efforts bring motocross to East County youths

by Greg Eichelberger

It all began as an instrument to keep disadvantaged kids from getting into trouble, but it has since become much more than that, and one man, John Merkel, is responsible.

Since opening the Cactus Park BMX motocross bike race track in Lakeside seven years ago, the longtime Santee resident has seen its magic work on both young and old, but, ultimately, he's the one whose been the most blessed.

After working 20 years for the city of El Cajon as an equipment maintenance supervisor, the husband of Donna, father of 13 (eight "homemade" and five adopted that range from nine to 40), grandfather of 28, and "dad" to an innumerable amount of foster kids, he decided to lease



Santee's John Merkel has made a big impact with his Cactus Park BMX race track.

Photo by Greg Eichelberger

a small tract of land from the county adjacent to the Bobby Sox fields near El Capitan High School on Ashwood.

"I was inspired by my son, Tim, who was into motocross at the time," he said, noting that his offspring now is a profes-

sional on the BMX tour.

He said that he originally wanted to help kids achieve something on an individual level, and that he believes that's especially important for foster children.

After meeting a few people at the Kearney Mesa track where Tim raced, he discovered a need for an East County facility. However, it turned out that he was the only one with enough starting capital (\$26,000) to begin such a venture.

He took it upon himself to lease the land, and with a few others, designed and built the layout, which caters to those under 12 years of age.

He said that we did this because a standard 1,600 foot track will never be completed by a small child, adding that ours is only 1,065 feet and can be navigated and negotiated by anyone of any age.

Currently, Merkel's youngest participant is a 2-1/2-year-old (most kids that age are still toddling around in diapers, not in full BMX gear riding a bike!), while his oldest is a 53-year old dentist from El Cajon.

He has also made the course with less technical trickery, opting for the simplistic route, which most riders seem to appreciate, if it's national number three ranking is any indication.

This uncomplicated design also has not kept it from becoming a much-sought-after venue for state competitions, such as the qualifying races held there recently.

Serving over 800 American Bicycle Association (ABA) members from El Cajon, Santee, Lakeside, Jamul, Alpine, Ramona and other San Diego locations, the track holds races every Monday and Thursday evenings, as well as Saturday mornings.

A practice session also takes place on Friday. The only stipulation to participating is that a person obtain an ABA membership (monthly \$15, yearly \$35) and pay the eight dollar race entry fee.

"There is a misconception that we're making a lot of money on this," he said. "In reality, much, if any, of the profit



Racers participate in the recent state qualifying matches at the Cactus Park race course.

Photo by Greg Eichelberger

goes to maintenance and repair, while other funds go to local charities."

With few sponsors to fall back on, most of these funds come right from Merkel's pocket, although some businesses and individuals have helped out on occasion.

Some lucky kids, however, have gained sponsorships which help defray the costs of what can be a rather expensive hobby. Due to the great income disparity in Lakeside, Merkel also tries to assist those children who do not have such opportunities, or who may come from impoverished households.

A free hot dog, soda or piece of needed equipment will then find its way into that child's hands, with no questions asked.

Unfortunately, since the county does not sanction the sport like it does baseball and football, Merkel and friends are forced to cover some insurance costs, too. A recent string of break-ins

has reduced his stock, as well.

But, overall, the good put forth by this structure outweighs the negative, as Merkel has seen his young charges become strong and straight, and even go on to state, national and world competition.

To make sure everyone receives something, he holds occasional trophy-dashes designed to keep kids interested in the sport.

"Seeing the look on a child's face when he or she gets a prize can take years off a person's life," he said, adding that it's a special feeling, not only for them, but for himself and the others who help, as well; it makes all of the trouble worth it.

As for his future, he candidly admits that he'll probably be at this race track until he dies, because that's where he's the happiest.

For more information on the Cactus Park course, call 448-2718 or 390-6017.

Racers Against Drugs to regroup, recruit dues-paying members

by Joe Naiman

Racers Against Drugs (RAD), the organization which urges youths to consider alternatives such as racing instead of using drugs, will begin its membership drive Aug. 23 at the Cajon Speedway.

RAD, which has never had official memberships in the past, will be selling memberships at the West, East and Pit gates. Memberships are \$15 for an individual or \$25 for a family, and a sticker and patch will be provided for those who join.

"It's not just funds," said Racers Against Drugs President Bob Meese. "We want people to have some ownership in the organization."

Membership signups and a bake sale at three track locations will raise money for the organization that night.

The membership drive marks a return to visibility of Racers Against Drugs at the track. Meese hadn't driv-



Racers Against Drugs President Bob Meese with Paula Lantis (left) and Carol Timm at last year's Show 'n' Shine.

Photo by Joe Naiman

en during the 1997 season until his Street Stocks race Aug. 16, and neither Vice president Carol Timm or Treasurer Steve Lantis has raced at Cajon Speedway this year.

Meese, an engineering consultant professionally, has been beset by work conflicts all year.

His schedule has shown the need for additional volunteers. The annual Show 'n' Shine, which had been the primary fundraiser for Racers Against Drugs from 1994 to 1996, will not take place this year due to insufficient volunteer commitment.

The organization, which focuses its effort on visiting schools, has had some activity this summer, as year-round schools have been encouraged to schedule visits during the off-peak request time.

The start of school next month will lead to added visits to schools. Red Rib-

bon Week in October usually results in heavy demand for the racers. Meese prefers to educate students throughout the year and not just during Red Ribbon Week.

RAD provides posters and pledge cards to students, necessitating raising funds for those activities. Racing community members from Cajon Speedway, Barona Speedway, and the San Diego Karting Association volunteer their services and bring their cars to schools which request their presence.

As has been the case when membership was unofficial, one need not drive to be part of Racers Against Drugs. Membership is open to anyone who has an interest in racing. Drivers, crew members and others involved in the racing community have been part of the unofficial membership of RAD.

Although Meese was happy to be back at Cajon Speedway, he was not satisfied with the result Aug. 16. "I hate not finishing."

Summer safety tips offered

The sun is out, the weather is warm, and plans are being made for picnics at the lake, hikes in the woods and outings to the beach. Whatever activities are on tap, be alert to the host of hazards that sour summer fun.

In the sun. Whether you're a beachcomber, a gardener, a golfer or just a lover of the great outdoors, remember to keep your cool as the mercury rises. Keeping cool is the best way to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke-faintness, vomiting or collapse caused by prolonged exposure to high temperatures. Drink fluids frequently and wear loose clothing.

Plus, staying cool by shying away from the sun (especially during the middle of the day when rays are most intense) can decrease the risk of skin cancer. Exposed skin should be covered with sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher.

On the trail. At the first sign of spring, it's tempting to haul out your equipment and get moving. Be sure bikes, in-line skates and other sporting equipment are in good repair. Many fitness equipment stores will perform a free maintenance check.

Helmets are inexpensive (most cost between \$10 and \$30). Never wear a helmet after it has been involved in a crash. Instead, replace it immediately. For in-line skaters, knee and elbow pads and wrist guards also are a must.

In the water. For safety's sake, no one should ever swim alone. Children, even those playing in a small backyard pool with a few inches of water, should be supervised at all times. Each year 200 children ages 5 to 9 drown, though many of them know how to swim.

Boats should be equipped for safety before taking them out. The U.S. Coast Guard recommends a first-aid kit, transistor radio, extra fuel, paddles or oars, anchor and line and drinking water on board. Boaters, personal watercraft riders or anyone who can't swim should wear life vests or jackets while on the water. Floating toys, such as kickboards and beach balls, are no substitute for a Coast Guard-approved life vest or jacket.

In the backyard. Mowing the lawn can ruin a sunny afternoon if you're unaware of potential hazards. Remove twigs, stones and large objects that could be thrown by the mower. Wear long pants and shoes.

Tools, chemicals and mower fuel are important for a beautiful lawn, but they can be deadly in a child's hands. Keep these items in a detached shed or garage, on a high shelf or locked up out of a child's reach.

Before firing up the barbecue this summer, be sure not to serve up unwanted bacteria. Follow these suggestions to help avoid food poisoning:

Wash hands with warm, soapy water before handling food and after handling raw meats; Wash salads and raw produce thoroughly; Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold until serving. Don't partially cook meats for grilling. Either fully cook them beforehand and put them on the grill just before serving, or keep them frozen. Cook meats completely. Meat juices should run clear; Keep serving bowls covered. Refrigerate leftovers immediately: When in doubt, throw it out. Expiration dates, especially on dairy products, are less reliable in hot weather; Leave mayonnaise-based salads and custard-type desserts at home or keep them well-chilled in a cooler. These foods spoil quickly.

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Phillip Giannangeli, Paul Treske.

Betty Jo Tucker

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All materials must be received by the Monday preceding the date of publication. The editor reserves the right to edit all submissions.

Advertising

All advertising is subject to current rate card. The publisher reserves the right to reject an advertiser's order.

Only publication of an advertisement shall constitute final acceptance.

Send all correspondence to Forum Publications, Inc., PO Box 127, Lemon Grove, CA 91946

**For advertising rates
call Dan
461-4306**

Community Notes

Low income foreclosure help available

There's hope for homeowners in default. Foreclosure Counseling Agency has announced that it has received \$150,000 from the county of San Diego to provide small loans to homeowners who are in default.

The following requirements must be met in order to be eligible to apply for funds: Mortgage payments must be in default; applicants must be low-income, defined at 80 percent of the regional median income; the property involved must be located in unincorporated areas including Spring Valley, Casa De Oro, Lakeside or Lemon Grove.

The funds from the county represent a new pilot program designed to help homeowners with financial support during a hardship.

Homeowners who meet the above criteria, and are interested in applying for a loan or who have questions about the foreclosure prevention process should contact Freda Anderson at 281-9466.

Lemon Grove Sheriff's Log

July 16-Aug. 1, 1997

1600 blk. Bakersfield St. Petty theft. \$500 value.

July 31, 1997

7000 blk. Madison Ave. Auto theft. \$24,000 value.

July 31-Aug. 1, 1997

6800 blk. Federal Blvd. Petty theft. \$300 value.

July 31, 1997

8400 blk. Broadway. Petty theft. \$425 value.

Aug. 1, 1997

7000 blk. Broadway. Commercial burglary. \$18 value.

7200 blk. Pacific Ave. Strong-arm robbery. \$600 value.

1300 blk. Skyline Dr. Grand theft. \$1,235 value.

Aug. 2, 1997

7000 blk. Broadway. Commercial burglary. Value unknown.

7300 blk. Broadway. Grand theft. \$7,800 value.

Lemon Grove Almanac

1994 Population:	25,100	City Attorney:	Gloria McLean
Incorporated:	1977	City Clerk:	Christine Taub
Area:	3.75 sq. mi.	Sheriff's Capt.:	Yolanda Collins
Median income:	\$34,399	Fire Chief:	Dale Chamberlain
1996-97 city budget:	\$26.3 million	Congressional district:	52nd - Duncan Hunter
1996 taxable sales:	\$265 million	State Senate district:	40th - Steve Peace
Mayor:	Mary Teresa Sessom	State Assembly district:	77th - Steve Baldwin
Council:	Thomas Clabby Craig Lake Dwight Shelley Jeff Jandura	Supervisory district:	2nd - Dianne Jacob
City Manager:	Doug Yount		
Planning Director:	Jim Butler		

PUBLIC NOTICES

CITY OF LEMON GROVE NOTICE

ADVERTISING FOR BIDS

Sealed proposals will be received by the City Engineer of the City of Lemon Grove, 125 Main Street, Lemon Grove, California, up to the hour of

2 p.m. or the 16th day of September, 1997 for performing work as follows:

TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS REPLACEMENT AND UPDATE (A Hazard Elimination and Safety Project)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The work to be done consists of furnishing all materials, equipment, tools, supervision, labor and incidentals required to complete the above stated project. The work consists of fabrication and installation of 411 street signs, Sign Post and Assembly Removal & Installation.

Funding for the TRAFFIC CONTROL SIGNS REPLACEMENT AND UPDATE (A Hazard Elimination and Safety Project) will be provided through the Federal Hazard Elimination and Safety (HES) Program. The engineer's estimate is \$82,000. HES constitutes 100% of the total project budget. HES bid and contract requirements are included in the bid packet.

This project has a goal of 15 percent Disadvantaged Business (DB) participation

The bids received will be publicly opened and read at the City Offices, 3232 Main Street, Lemon Grove, California. Copies of the bid package, consisting of a specifications package, may be obtained at that location at a non-refundable charge of \$10.00 per set. The mailing fee is an additional \$10.00. All bidders should direct their questions during the bidding period to Carmen Fink, at John Powell & Associates, Inc., (760) 753-1120. No bid will be accepted from a contractor who has not been licensed in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 9, Division III of Business and Professions Code. The bidder for this Contract must possess a valid C-

61 (D-42) Limited Specialty - sign
Installation license

The successful bidder must have a City of Lemon Grove Business License prior to commencement of work.

The City Council of Lemon Grove hereby notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively insure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement for bids, minority business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, sex or national origin in consideration for an award.

The inclusion of Federal money for all of this project's funding required compliance with Federal labor regulations. Federal minimum wage rates for this project as determined by the Secretary of Labor are set forth in the special provisions as "General Wage Decision No. CA960001." Not less than the general prevailing wages, as determined by the Director of Industrial Relations or the Federal minimum wages as determined by the Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher, shall be paid by the Contractor and its Subcontractors to all workers employed on the project.

The City Council reserves the right to reject any and all bids, or any combination of bids. Bids must be accompanied by a 10% bid bond as specified in Section 1.

Bidders Instructions of the bid documents. No bidder may withdraw his bid without forfeiture of his bid bond within sixty (60) calendar days after the actual date of the bid opening.

Prospective bidders are hereby directed to pay particular attention to the applicable section in the bid package for full directions and requirements as to submittal of bids, bonds and agreements.

Date: August 18, 1997

Charles D. Stuck

Public Works Director/City

Engineer

The City of Lemon Grove com-

plies with the Americans With

Disabilities Act. If you require

reasonable accommodations for

this bid opening, contact the City

Public Works Department at (619)

464-6934 at least 48 hours prior to

the scheduled opening.

Lemon Grove Review

August 19 & 26, 1997

Engineering Contractors - A

License. This project has a goal of

17 percent Disadvantaged Busi-

ness (DB) participation

The successful bidder must have a

City of Lemon Grove Business

License prior to commencement of

work.

The City Council of Lemon Grove hereby notifies all bidders that it

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Sports Beat

with Greg Eichelberger



Hello again. Sometimes sports is a funny thing. On one hand, we idolize athletes much like Greek gods, hanging on their every on-field deed and glorifying their achievements as if their lives depended on them.

We are, however, quick to condemn them the moment they are proven to be human beings. Such was the case last week when three San Diego State University Aztec football players, running back Tyrone Evans and wide receivers Az Hakim and Lonny Mitchell, were arrested last week for a rape which occurred last March. Then, as if this story wasn't goofy enough, the trio was released the next day, due to insufficient DNA evidence.

For one day, these guys were vilified by press and pundits alike, being held up as the lowest form of animal. Then, all of a sudden, they're supposed to get back to normal and get their sullied reputations back. They can ask Richard Jewell what that's like.

PADRES WATCH – The team has finally brought all of the Rickey Henderson trade talk to fruition by dealing the future Hall-of-Famer to the Anaheim Angels last Wednesday. Now, he goes to a team which, surprisingly, leads the AL West, leaving a squad that's still nine games back in third place.

I have to admit that my opinion of Henderson before last year was equal to that of Charles Manson. He was arrogant, cocky, rude and obnoxious – so I thought.

But in the past season and two-thirds, I have radically changed my mind regarding this man, who has treated me and Forum Publications with the utmost respect. I guess you have to know someone to really know someone. Therefore, I wish Rickey all of the luck and success in the world.

I will also tell him that when he and the Halos arrive here on Aug. 27 and 28. Hopefully, he'll be a decent replacement for coke-head Tony Phillips, one of the game's biggest head cases (next to Marvin Freeman).

Speaking of baseball, I thought I would update our local readers on how some of our East County players are doing in the various professional leagues around the nation.

John Barnes, El Cajon, is in the Red Sox organization; **Craig Benny**, Santee, Reds; **Marcus Giles**, El Cajon, Braves; **Scott Hopgood**, El Cajon, Sonoma City, Ind., Independent League; **Wynter Phoenix**, El Cajon, Dodgers; **Ian Rand**, La Mesa, Giants; **Mike Rendina**, Grays Harbor, Ind., Independent League; **Brian Smith**, El Cajon, Mariners; **Shane Spencer**, El Cajon, Yankees; **Aaron Stranfeld**, El Cajon, Braves; and **Eddie Williams**, La Mesa (and featured in our paper while he was with Los Angeles several months back), is now playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates. Williams also cracked a two-run homer last week off Atlanta's Mark Wohlers, helping his new team defeat the Braves, 5-2.

Bob Trellford (I believe that's how you spell it), the coach of the Monte Vista roller hockey team, has promised me a big story coming up in the next few weeks. And as soon as I talk to him about it, I'll let you know.

Lakeside's **Dee Dudley**, a personal strength and fitness guru, is conducting workout sessions in her own private gymnasium. For times and other information, call her at 390-2953.

The 5-on-5 Men's Fall Basketball League (isn't that what basketball is – five on five?!) for players 6'4" and under, is signing up players in El Cajon now. Form a team or join up with others by calling Hoops Unlimited at 1-800-834-2829. Scorekeepers are also needed for this enterprise, so give them a ring.

It seems that Bill Center, the *Union-Tribune*'s version of Edgar Allen Poe, has exaggerated things a bit by claiming that El Cajon's **Austin Cameron** and **Auggie Vidovich** of Lakeside, were "bigwigs" on the Cajon Speedway circuit.

Joe Naiman, an expert on such mundane matter, assures us that Center "doesn't know a spare tire from a hole in the ground," further claiming that Vidovich races Go-Karts! Will the madness ever end? Not if I can help it.

If you'd like to contribute to the idiocy, just call 390-7103 and we'll talk. Until then, have a great sports week.

Commentary

by Marv Rosen

In recent weeks, with the advent of the new National Football League preseason games, it has become apparent that the defenses have a game plan that involves, not tackling a quarterback, but putting him out of action.

While this may not seem to pertain to East County, it must be remembered that what the pros have started with their zone blitzes, which overwhelm the offensive blockers ability to protect the quarterback, is often picked up by players and coaches at the college, high school and even youth leagues.

Various answers to the problem have been tried, many with success, such as the so-

Coach: Business can learn from sports

by Greg Eichelberger

The stories of coaches motivating their players to score huge victories in the face of tremendous odds are numerous, from Knute Rockne's famous "Let's win one for the Gipper" speech, to modern managers willing their charges to win even as this is written.

Although her clients are executives and merchants, for the most part, rather than sports participants, Sandra Schrift has been prodding them on to success in the cut-throat world of business; a world which can often make the gridiron look like nursery school naptime.

Schrift, who has lived in La Mesa for almost 30 years, raising five children (who all attended Valhalla High School), is personal tele-coach and motivator with a nationwide clientele.

But before that, she was involved in the Grossmont school district, training tutors. "Then they cut the program," she said, "so I began to use my talent for speaking and training speakers for small businesses in San Diego."

She then started to market the various speakers, which led to the creation of The Podium in 1982, the first national professional speakers bureau.

After a while, she and her colleagues were brokering such luminary and sought-after lecturers as Pat Riley, Charlton Heston, Alan Greenspan and former presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush.

"This lasted about 13 years, until I sold the client list to another broker," she said. "Then I began to use my motivation techniques to assist small businesses and entrepreneurs, developing and tapping a newly emerging market called tele-coaching."

Send us your sports news and photos* TODAY!

Box 127, Lemon Grove CA 91946

*Enclose self-addressed, stamped envelope if photos are to be retuned.

many "accidents" are occurring to be coincidental, considering the all-out blitzing techniques employed by many teams.

The only way that would be truly effective would to have quarterbacks carry flags, such as in flag football (funny, yes?).

Unfortunately, too many coaches and players tend to forget just what the game is supposed to be, score more points than the opposition through outplaying your opponent, not through attrition.

Let's address the issue before it becomes necessary to carry enumerable quarterbacks to last through an entire season or they need to be listed as an endangered species.

This method allows Schrift to reach people all over the globe via the phone, FAX machines and computers, helping them move from where they are to where they want to be.

She does this by teaching them to speak better and to become irresistibly attractive as opposed to using the old methods of hardcore selling and promotion.

Working with groups from California, Hawaii, Illinois, Florida, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Wisconsin and Minnesota, among other states and the country of Colombia, Schrift claims this method of communication eliminates the need to dress up or meet in person for specific appointments.

"Just like athletics, when total concentration is necessary, there are distractions that we can avoid by using the phone or computer," she said. She noted that some of the distractions are the clothes they are wearing, or their appearance in general.

She added that then we can zero in on what they need to do to improve themselves and their enterprises.

Schrift attempts to help her clients become more accountable by asking certain questions and guiding them towards their goal of becoming better at their jobs, whatever those jobs may be.

To help her with her work, she is constantly learning new methods, including enrolling in a Master's Coaching Creden-

tial program.

This involves two classes per month, all by telephone, covering such areas as life planning, profitability, client location and spirituality, among other coaching techniques.

But lest you think that she is just another staid, ordinary, boring businesswoman, Schrift has a few surprises up her sleeve, so to speak.

"I've been belly-dancing for 7-1/2 years now," she laughed. "It's crazy, but it's a place to have fun, relieve stress and direct my passion, and that's the way I coach."

She added that coaching is about commitment, an intimate relationship that helps bring someone to their fullest potential.

She said it is why she's so excited about what she is doing and will continue to do the best she can to help people become the best they can be.

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- TUNE UPS
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